



Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife Matters Legislative Monthly

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Legislative Session Update

Governor approves new plan to manage invasive plants and animals

PHOENIX — Most people know that hitchhiking is dangerous. What they may not know is that many of Arizona's hitchhikers are nonnative invasive plants and animals that have been unintentionally brought by people over time through their travels or trades. Certainly not all nonnative species fit this description of "invader", but those that do can pose risks and expenses to Arizona.

To better deal with this issue, Gov. Janet Napolitano has approved a new statewide invasive species management plan that addresses ways to prevent or manage the proliferation of invasive pests.

The plan was developed by the Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council (AISAC), a multi-partner organization created by an Executive Order issued by the Governor in 2007.

The Council is comprised of a variety of stakeholder and agency representatives, and is supported and led by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona Department of Agriculture. Both agencies have a vested interest in the effect of pest invasions on Arizona's resources and economy. For example, the Department of Agriculture has had to deal with the agricultural damage that can result from pest invasions.

"We have spent thousands of dollars in production costs and pesticide applications trying to eradicate plant pests on our crops," said Donald Butler, AISAC co-chair and director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture. "But the importation and distribution of plants is a fact of life in our global economy. AISAC will take a proactive approach by communicating best practices on invasive species prevention." Arizona Game and Fish Department officials have also seen first-hand how invasive species can negatively impact aquatic and terrestrial habitats, interrupt ecosystem processes, and cause disease in animals and humans. One example is the recent discovery of the quagga mussel, a nonnative invasive species in Arizona. A small, freshwater mollusk, quaggas can attach themselves to any hard surface in a lake. They can take up residence on a boat and clog engine cooling systems, or they can clog water pipes that carry water for drinking, irrigation or the production of electricity. They may also cause damage to aquatic environments, affecting fish populations and habitat. Less than two years ago, this aquatic nuisance was first discovered in Lake Mead. "It has now been found in lakes Havasu, Mohave and Pleasant," said Larry Voyles, AISAC co-chair and director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "This species was known to be a nuisance at the Great Lakes in Michigan, but has now been introduced to the western states by people who really didn't know better, and likely



purely by accident.”

“Arizona will take the steps outlined in the management plan developed by the Council to address invasive species education, control and restoration needs,” said Governor Napolitano. “We have our work cut out for us, but based on their management plan, I know we can be effective and productive.” The Council will continue to meet quarterly, and Council work groups will be helping Arizona implement the management plan’s objectives and recommending strategies to help us track progress. For more information about invasive species, or to obtain a copy of Arizona’s management plan, visit www.governor.state.az.us/AIS/.

OUI/DUI Working Together

GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY, PARTNERS LAUNCH 3-WEEK LABOR DAY DUI CRACKDOWN BEGINNING AUG. 15

New partnership with AZ Game and Fish Department

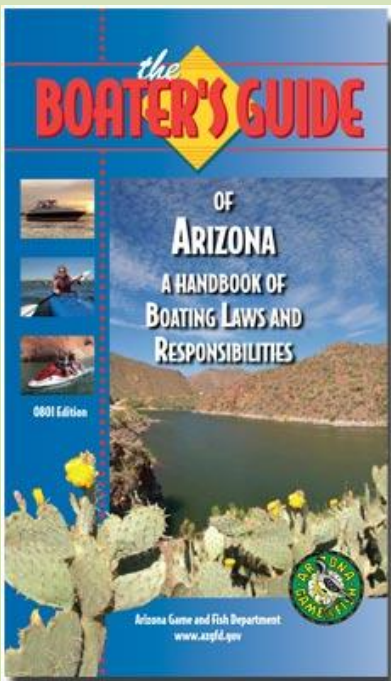
Will Highlight Dangers of Boating while Impaired as well as Driving Impaired

PHOENIX—The Governor’s Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) and law enforcement and traffic-safety partners announced today its participation in the annual national “Drunk Driving, Over the Limit, Under Arrest” DUI Crackdown that begins this Fri., Aug. 15 and runs through Labor Day, Sept. 1. During this three-week campaign, Arizona’s DUI Task Forces around the state will be out in force to remove impaired drivers. Last year’s campaign resulted in 858 DUI arrests, including 323 for extreme DUI, and 80 impaired drivers under the age of 21.

And since nearly 50 percent of fatalities on Arizona’s waterways involve alcohol (which is slightly more than the 45 percent of traffic-related deaths that involve alcohol), GOHS and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) have created a joint campaign to educate motorists and boaters about the dangers of [Operating Under the Influence \(OUI\)](#) as well as driving impaired.

“Impaired driving and boating are serious offenses and perpetrators should expect the consequences to be equally serious,” said Governor Janet Napolitano. “It makes sense for Arizonans to be responsible and designate drivers for both motor vehicles and watercraft. In addition, underage drinking continues to be the number one substance abuse issue facing youth in Arizona, and adults need to set a positive example.”

Adults and youth should know that the legal drinking age in Arizona is 21, and officers will be citing offenders appropriately. During last year’s crackdown, 217 minors were cited around the holidays for underage consumption. Adults are often unaware that the legal blood alcohol content (BAC) for those under 21 year of age is .00, not .08 as is the legal limit for those over 21. In addition, parents and other adults can be cited for providing alcohol to minors, and can learn more at www.drawyourline.com Regardless of age, impaired driving will not be tolerated in Arizona, and motorists need to remember that you can be cited “if you’re impaired to the slightest degree.”



“Over the next couple of weeks leading up to the Labor Day holiday weekend—and every time you get behind the wheel, whether it’s a vehicle or boat—make sure the driver is sober or find another safe mode of transportation,” said GOHS Director Richard Fimbres. “For those who don’t make the right, safe decision, law enforcement will be out in force to remove these dangerous, deadly drivers from Arizona’s roadways and waterways.” Due to recent legislation, penalties for boating while impaired almost mirror those of driving under the influence, including mandatory jail time for all offenders. Through this partnership, GOHS and AGFD, with the participation of 18 Arizona law enforcement agencies, produced a series of public service announcements (in English and Spanish) called [“OUI/DUI Working Together”](#) that will be airing this month and throughout the boating season. The goal is to increase OUI/DUI awareness and advise the public that driving or boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be tolerated in Arizona. On the waterways, 357 boaters were arrested statewide in 2007 for operating under the influence. OUI? DUI? Expect the Max.

“Boating while impaired continues to be a critical problem and a high-priority target enforcement objective for watercraft law enforcement officers,” said Mike Senn, Assistant Director of Field Operations for AGFD. “This partnership will only enhance Game and Fish’s *Boat Safe, Boat Smart, Boat Sober* campaign because statewide law enforcement agencies are conveying one message for everyone, and that is, if you are caught on the water operating a boat while intoxicated, you will suffer very similar consequences as if you were caught driving a car drunk.”

Arizona experiences bald eagle baby boom

With the last bald eagle nestling finally out of the nest, the numbers are in and a record number of eaglets took to Arizona’s skies in 2008.

A record 53 nestlings reached the fledging milestone this year, a 26 percent increase over the previous year. The number of young hatched also increased by four birds over last year.

“Arizona’s intensive management of the species is paying off,” said Kenneth Jacobson, Arizona Game and Fish Department bald eagle management coordinator. “The period between the bird hatching and taking its first flight is a critical time. The bald eagle nestwatch program and regular monitoring played a significant role in helping these nestlings develop from eggs into independent fledglings.”

The breeding season for bald eagles in Arizona typically runs from December through June, although bald eagle nestlings in the northern reaches of the state hatch and fledge later than those in the southern parts of the state.

Bald eagle numbers over the past 30 years have grown more than 400 percent in the state with the number of breeding pairs increasing in that time from only 11 pairs to 56 in 2008.



The Arizona Game and Fish Department, a leading partner in recovery efforts for the species, attributes the success to cooperative on-the-ground management. Through the Southwest Bald Eagle Management Committee (SWBEMC), a broad coalition of 23 government agencies, private organizations and Native American tribes, a plan is in place to help ensure the continued success of the bald eagle population in Arizona. For more information on bald eagles in Arizona, visit www.swbemc.org.

Hunters raise nearly \$500,000 for Arizona's wildlife

News Media

Aug 12, 2008

Special tags for big game hunts generate impressive funding

PHOENIX — The 2008 Arizona Big Game Super Raffle (AZBGSR) was held July 19 in Phoenix and nine lucky ticket holders walked away with a special big game tag and a chance at a hunt-of-a-lifetime.

However, the real news is what happened for all of the residents of Arizona. The raffle generated more than \$475,000, which will go directly on the ground to benefit Arizona's wildlife.

"The final tally for all nine tags was \$478,860, and although down from last year's record high of \$557,641, this year was a tremendous success, given the current economic conditions," says Charlie Kelly, president of the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle.

Every dollar raised for each species by the raffle of these special big game tags is returned to the Arizona Game and Fish Department and managed by the Arizona Habitat Partnership Committee (AHPC) for that particular species. With input from 12 local habitat partners across the state, as well as the input from the organizations involved the fund raising, they collectively determine which projects will provide the most benefit to each species represented. The number of projects funded through this program is extensive. In 2007 alone, there were more than 85 projects approved. The types of projects run the gamut, from hauling water to water catchments during drought years, all the way to contracting helicopter services for the catching and relocating the iconic desert bighorn sheep, to increase their range and population. Other projects include grassland restoration, fence removal, research and others. And, when these dollars are matched with other fund sources, the benefits to wildlife are multiplied many times over.

One of the most noteworthy projects that many Arizona travelers have benefitted from is the "State Route 260 Project." While complex, it was a comprehensive package between the department and ADOT to reduce the amount of wildlife-related collisions along a 17-mile stretch of Highway 260, just below the Mogollon Rim just west of Payson. The many changes made to that section of the freeway resulted in an 85-percent reduction in wildlife-related collisions in the first year, while increasing the ability for wildlife to cross the highway and link habitats.

Ron Thompson, coordinator for AHPC, had this to say. "The amazing thing about this program is the amount of money being raised by such a small minority (approximately one percent) of the state's population," he said. "What excites me is the thought of getting more conservation and outdoor





groups involved working as one collective group. With even greater funding, options on the table could include conservation easements and the protection of open spaces – where not only wildlife will benefit, but again, the citizens of Arizona and its traveling guests.”

The AZBGSR started in 2006. The tags that are raffled off are granted by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission as Special Big Game Tags. The tags are publicly awarded to soliciting organizations each year. The big game tags raffled included one each for pronghorn antelope, black bear, buffalo, Coues whitetail, desert bighorn sheep, elk, javelina, mule deer, and turkey.

The uniqueness of the special tags is that the hunting season is year-round with very few limitations on hunting areas, allowing tag winners the time to pursue a trophy animal, many of which are only found in Arizona. The raffle winners for the following tags were:

- Antelope - Cal Sutton, Peoria
- Bear - Dwight Callahan, Gold Canyon
- Buffalo - Ryan Ashton, Saint Johns
- Coues Deer - Brian Williams, Christiana, Tenn.
- Elk - Robert Dunn, Yuma
- Javelina - JC Amberlin, Kingman
- Mule Deer - Jerry Elliott, Gilbert
- Bighorn Sheep - Scott Krieg, Glendale
- Turkey - Mark Griffith, Mesa
- Swarovski optics package - Richard Wilson, Phoenix

So, the next time you see a herd of elk near Flagstaff, or antelope in an open plains of Prescott, or if you're lucky to spot a desert bighorn sheep peering down from a cliff in the desolate desert, remember to think of hunters as conservationists, as the majority of wildlife conservation and management of game animals by the Arizona Game and Fish Department is made possible by funding generated from the sale of hunting licenses, hunt permit-tags, and matching funds from federal excise taxes hunters pay on guns, ammunition and related equipment.

To learn more about the Arizona Game and Fish Department's conservation efforts, visit www.azgfd.gov/conservation.

To learn more about the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle, visit www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com.

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Department Staff have contributed to this publication in the form of articles and photographs.

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